

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
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ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD
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MEETING

IN THE MATTER OF: *
*
Neighborhood Restaurant Group XIX *
LLC t/a To Be Determined * Fact-
1206 Wisconsin Ave., NW * Finding
Retailer CT - ANC-2E * Hearing
License No. 95913 *
*
(Request to Extend Safekeeping) *

September 9, 2015

The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board
met in the Alcoholic Beverage Control Hearing
Room, Reeves Building, 2000 14th Street, N.W.,
Suite 400S, Washington, D.C. 20009, Chairperson
Ruthanne Miller, presiding.

PRESENT:

RUTHANNE MILLER, Chairperson
NICK ALBERTI, Member
DONALD BROOKS, Member
MIKE SILVERSTEIN, Member
HECTOR RODRIGUEZ, Member
JAMES SHORT, Member

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

2 10:34 a.m.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: So we have a
4 Fact-Finding Hearing next. That is Neighborhood
5 Restaurant Group XIX, LLC t/a To Be Determined
6 located at 1206 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., License
7 No. 95913, in ANC-2E. And this is with respect
8 to a license in safekeeping. Okay.

9 MR. KLINE: Good morning. Andrew
10 Kline on behalf of the applicant. Seated to my
11 left is Michael Babin, who is the principal of
12 the Neighborhood Restaurant Group. The
13 Neighborhood Restaurant Group is the operator of
14 17 restaurants in Washington and Northern
15 Virginia.

16 Depending on timing, which will be
17 the 18th or the 19th, I know that the Board has
18 been bringing licensees who do have licenses in
19 safekeeping in for Fact-Findings.

20 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes.

21 MR. KLINE: I think this one is
22 pretty straightforward as we are expecting this

1 business to reopen in October. Work is well-
2 underway. I have a copy of the building permit
3 for remodeling that is being done, which is
4 almost done. And the trade name, yes, was To Be
5 Determine, but I'm just advised that it is
6 determined and the establishment will be called
7 The Sovereign. So we will be filing an
8 appropriate letter requesting approval of that
9 trade name.

10 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

11 MR. KLINE: But otherwise, we are
12 here and this one is moving forward. It should
13 be pretty straightforward. We're happy to
14 answer any questions that the Board might have.

15 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

16 Questions by Board Members?

17 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: Mr. Babin, if
18 you could give us perhaps a list of some of the
19 restaurants that you currently operate that are
20 well-known to us, so that --

21 MR. BABIN: Yes.

22 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: -- that would -

1 -

2 MR. BABIN: Absolutely. So in
3 Washington, we own and operate Birch & Barley
4 and ChurchKey on 14th Street. The Iron Gate on
5 N Street. Bluejacket Brewery and The Arsenal
6 Restaurant in the Yards Park area. And oh, The
7 Partisan and on -- in the Penn Quarter and two
8 locations for the Red Apron Butcher Shop in GBD,
9 which is a fried chicken and donut place in
10 Dupont Circle. Those are our restaurants and we
11 are also -- we do one large annual event every
12 year that you right remember. It's called
13 Snallygaster. It's actually this coming
14 weekend, so we aren't here for that, that's our
15 group as well.

16 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: And this place
17 is going to be called?

18 MR. BABIN: Called The Sovereign.

19 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: Say again,
20 please?

21 MR. BABIN: The Sovereign. I hope
22 it is easier to remember than it is to -- yeah.

1 The Sovereign. And it is a Belgian restaurant
2 and bar. We are -- it's I think going to be a
3 really special place. We did a lot of thinking
4 about it. We traveled to Belgium.

5 We are going to be -- we will have a
6 beer list, Belgian beer list that I think is --
7 will be -- I think it will be the best in the
8 world. You know, in all -- I mean, after being
9 in Belgium, we're going to bring beers to the
10 States that have really never been served here
11 before, so it's just pretty -- it's a great
12 project.

13 The location is down an alley in
14 Georgetown, so we had to give a lot of thought
15 to just to how are we going to overcome that
16 condition. And so things moved slower than we
17 would have liked. We are highly incentivized in
18 our lease terms to move quickly, but we needed
19 to take the time to make good decisions that
20 will serve us well in the long term.

21 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: And what is
22 your best hope of opening? What are your --

1 what are the hoops that you still have to jump
2 through?

3 MR. BABIN: Well --

4 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: And what is the
5 realistic time being that you know how things
6 work in this town?

7 MR. BABIN: Well, we -- what our big
8 hope was is that we were going to be able to
9 make major improvements to the alley itself.

10 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: Oh.

11 MR. BABIN: You know, before we open
12 the doors. And as the -- it has been a gradual
13 reveal of the obstacles to making those changes
14 in Georgetown especially, so eventually we said
15 we can't wait any longer. We are just going to
16 get this place open and then we will fix the
17 alley over time.

18 The alley is unsightly right now.
19 It's a state -- it's a city-owned alley. It
20 does not have through traffic. And there are
21 all kinds of problems typical to alleys, you
22 know. There is garbage out there. We have had

1 to deal with how are we going to contain and
2 enclose that? It's not even ours yet, but there
3 is an adjoining -- there is another restaurant,
4 El Centro, that has got like six dumpsters out
5 there.

6 We are alleviating that condition.
7 We wanted to repave it. We still plan on doing
8 that, that is going to take time. We are
9 looking at lighting options right now. We've
10 got two large gooseneck lights that light the
11 alley that look like they should be on the side
12 of an interstate. And, you know, it's very
13 unattractive.

14 So we will probably, unfortunately,
15 open with that condition, but we are close, I
16 think, to getting a better solution through the
17 Old Georgetown Board and the ANC, so hopefully
18 soon after opening. But and so that's the only
19 thing I would say is a little bit of rubber and
20 what I'm about to say is that, you know, I think
21 we might get open about October 15th.

22 If we can cross a couple of hurdles

1 in the meantime that say maybe we could get the
2 better lighting in place and, you know, some
3 improvements to the alley, let's say, within a
4 week or two of that, then I'll say let's wait.
5 Let's wait and open with it right.

6 If it's another two months, then we
7 are going to say get the place open and we will
8 figure it out later, because it has been a while
9 and, as I said, we are paying a price for the
10 delays. So --

11 MR. KLINE: So if I could boil that
12 down, so we are hearing December 1st at the
13 latest, at this point.

14 MR. BABIN: Yes, absolutely, yes.

15 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: Okay.

16 MEMBER SHORT: Madam Chair?

17 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Mr. Short?

18 MEMBER SHORT: Are you working with
19 the Georgetown BID or any of the civic
20 organizations?

21 MR. BABIN: Absolutely, yes.

22 MEMBER SHORT: The Historical

1 Society?

2 MR. BABIN: Yes. The BID has been
3 great. The ANC has been supportive. Again, I -
4 - not having ever done anything in Georgetown
5 and my architect is fantastic, but he is also a
6 little green when it comes to these things, so
7 there has been a gradual understanding that has
8 only peeled the layers of the onion to really
9 understand the process, which is a different
10 process than we are used to.

11 We also don't have any restaurants -
12 - I have never done a restaurant where, you
13 know, the entrance is a city-owned alley. So
14 it's just a lot of complicated issues.

15 We have got our lighting down the
16 alley implicates at least three different other
17 owner's buildings, because we have got to mount
18 it to other people's structures. You know,
19 there are so many people involved in this thing
20 that have to -- we have to satisfy along the
21 way.

22 MEMBER SHORT: I would think the

1 Georgetown BID would really be helping you out
2 with that.

3 MR. BABIN: They have been
4 fantastic. Great resource, but also just great
5 advocates, I think, so they are remarkable. A
6 great organization. I have worked with a lot of
7 BIDs, they are very impressive.

8 MEMBER SHORT: We wish you the very
9 best.

10 MR. BABIN: Thank you. Appreciate
11 that.

12 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Yes, Mr.
13 Rodriguez?

14 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Yes. So your
15 entrance will be an alley. I imagine you are
16 considering, you know, cameras for safety and
17 security?

18 MR. BABIN: We are, all of that.
19 Absolutely.

20 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

21 MR. BABIN: Yes, absolutely. The
22 alley right now, I mean, the alley can be a lot

1 safer. Right now it's being used for all kinds
2 of things it shouldn't be used for and the
3 evidence of that is there to see and smell every
4 day. So, you know, we are going to make it a
5 whole lot better just by adding the lights and
6 energy, the management of it happening.

7 So everybody is excited, everybody
8 in the community is excited about that,
9 including the Old Georgetown Board.

10 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: So then you
11 need a -- is there a need here to extend the
12 safekeeping?

13 MR. KLINE: Yes.

14 MS. BABIN: Yes.

15 MR. KLINE: We would request that it
16 be extended six months, which is customary,
17 which will be more than enough time.

18 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: I would like to
19 move that we do that.

20 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

21 MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Second.

22 MEMBER ALBERTI: May I offer a

1 friendly amendment?

2 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: Sure.

3 MEMBER ALBERTI: I know that the
4 Agency is trying to get the safekeeping dates on
5 the schedule of end of March, end of October.
6 It just make it easy administratively for the
7 Agency.

8 MR. KLINE: Sure.

9 MEMBER ALBERTI: So I would
10 recommend that we set -- extend this until March
11 31st of next year.

12 MEMBER SILVERSTEIN: We can
13 certainly set that.

14 MR. BABIN: Is that almost six
15 months?

16 MR. KLINE: Yes, that's great.

17 MEMBER ALBERTI: Is that okay?

18 MR. KLINE: Yes, that's fine.

19 MEMBER ALBERTI: Okay. That's my
20 friendly amendment.

21 MEMBER SHORT: I second that motion.

22 MEMBER ALBERTI: All right.

1 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay. Any
2 others? All right. Then the motion has been
3 seconded to extend the license in safekeeping
4 until March 31, 2016.

5 All those in favor say aye.

6 ALL: Aye.

7 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All those
8 opposed? All those abstaining? The motion
9 passes 6-0-0.

10 MR. KLINE: Great. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Okay.

12 MR. KLINE: I just want you to know-

13 -

14 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Good luck.

15 MR. KLINE: -- when he says that
16 they are going to have the greatest list of
17 Belgian beers in the world, he is not kidding,
18 because Bluejacket is by far the state-of-the-
19 art brew pub in the country, if not the world.
20 So rest assured on that point.

21 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: All right.
22 We'll look forward to that.

1 MR. BABIN: Hope to see you there.

2 MR. KLINE: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MILLER: Thank you.

4 (Whereupon, the Fact-Finding Hearing
5 in the above-entitled matter was concluded at
6 10:44 a.m.)

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19th 2:17
1st 8:12

2

2000 1:13
20009 1:13
2015 1:11
2016 13:4

3

31 13:4
31st 12:11

4

400S 1:13

5

6

6-0-0 13:9

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8

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9 1:11
95913 1:8 2:7